terms: so, with chemical, there is no such term as "actinism" or, "actinic," the want of which very terms, by the way, "in all the dictionaries," induced a lady reader of our own, some time ago, to ask an explanation, which we accordingly gave in THE BUILDER, and which certainly ought to be in all the dictionaries now published. The meaning of the term "magneto-electricity" is not given, although something is incidentally said about electro-magnetism. In short, we fear that this abridgement has been too severely restricted. Some of the matter which it does contain, too, bears the mark of the pruning-knife in defective sense. Among the wood-cuts we observe an illustration of the term "arch," in which Norman imposts are combined with a classic keystone. As a mere abridgement, however, and hence necessarily imperfect and exposed to animadversion at all hands, this little volume contains much useful information not to be otherwise had for a few shillings.

Miscellanea.

BEARD'S DAGUERREOTYPES.—We have seen some beautiful specimens of a new invention announced by Mr. Beard as the enamelling of daguerreotypes. The object is to render the lights and shades permanent in place of more or less fleeting, in spite of "fixation," as they are said to have hitherto been. Time only can show, of course, whether a complete remedy has been found for this evil; but this we can forthwith say for Mr. Beard, that we believe he would put forth no announcement in the truth of which he himself does not fully believe, and that the probability is, therefore, that this enamelling will be found to render his daguerreotypes more permanent than they were.——From recent proceedings in the Academy of Sciences at Paris, reported in an American journal, we perceive that some of the experiments of M. St. Victor, as well as of M. Becquerel, in heliochromy or sun *colouring*, have been published. A silver plate, prepared with water acidulated with hydrochloric acid and the battery, gives, it is said, all the colours, by the action of light, but the ground of the plate is always black, and the fixation is a difficulty and a secret. It has also been found that all the substances which produce coloured flames will yield coloured images by means of light. It is a remarkable circumstance how essential the halogens, such as chlorine, bromine, &c., are to sun pictures. These agencies absorb the actinic or chemical principle from the solar ray, and differ much in this respect according as they are previously exposed to light or prepared in darkness like the daguerreotype plates themselves. Would not the idea of Goethe or of St. Pierre, as to the relation between colour and mere shade, shed some additional light on this interesting subject?

THE OLD PRIORY AT YARMOUTH.—The remains of the old Benedictine Priory, adjoining the church at Yarmouth, are about to be rescued from the ignoble purposes to which it has been devoted (stables, hay-lofts, &c.), and converted into National Schools for the north end of the town. The hall has already been cleared of the rafters and rubbish which formerly encumbered it, and a series of almost perfect arches have been disclosed, the stone doorways opened, and four large and lofty windows cleared of the bricks which had been inserted almost to the entire destruction of the tracery and mullions. The hall measures 50 feet by 30. It is proposed to erect a girls' and boys' school, with an infant school, at the west end, and residences for the masters and mistresses at the east end.

OSCILLATING ENGINES.—Messrs. James Wylie and Ephraim Morris, of New York, have invented an improvement in the reversing action of the simple and one-direction oscillating engine. By a peculiar arrangement of the exhaust and steam openings in the cheat, a simple hollow slide-valve is made to shut off the steam, let it on, and also change the steam into the exhaust port, and *vice versâ*. This same covered slide can be made to cut off by various devices.

OPENING OF BARROWS NEAR DRIFFIELD.—Some more of the barrows on Lord Londesborough's Kellerthorpe estate have been recently opened and a number of articles, including skeletons, bronze fibula and dagger, beads, urns, &c., found. In a large one of a conical shape, about two feet and a half below the surface, a kistvaen or vault was discovered, measuring between four and five feet in length, about three feet in breadth, and about two and a half feet in depth, and paved with stones at the bottom. The sides and ends are formed of slabs of red sandstone, and it was covered with a large block of it weighing upwards of a ton. It was flanked on three sides with similar slabs, two of which were standing on their edge upright. At the bottom of this rude depository of the dead lay a large skeleton, with the head towards the east and the legs drawn up. Near the knees was an urn of Etruscan vase-like appearance, carved all over with angular lines in rows running in opposite directions, an ornament peculiar to the ancient British period. The vault is considerably out of right angles at the corners, and though the slabs forming the sides and ends are pretty smooth, they do not bear the least marks of ever having had a tool applied to them, but are in the same state as when first hewn from the quarry. A curious consideration arises as to whence these huge stones have been brought, as there is not a quarry of similar stone within a distance of sixty or seventy miles, the nearest quarry producing such stone being at the Hambleton Hills.

DRY ROT—SNAILS.—Can any of your correspondents who are conversant with dry rot inform me whether *storing* with sulphur the space under a floor infected with that disease would be effectual in stopping it. There is little doubt that the sulphuric acid evolved by the process would destroy the existing vegetation, but it is a question whether the impregnation of the timber with the acid would not, by promoting an acetic fermentation, induce a tendency to engender the disease afresh. The information is asked for with reference to a case where pains were taken to remove not only the disease but the cause of it, by forming ample space under the floors, ventilating shafts, &c., yet without thorough cure. Query, what means are employed in ships affected by it? In some pantries which are not plastered, huge horned snails leave their slimy track upon the walls, to the annoyance of the householders. Is there any possibility of keeping them at a distance, short of plastering the walls? Replies will oblige others besides your obedient—L. L.

MR. BRASSEY, THE RAILWAY CONTRACTOR.—There is something striking in the enormous undertakings of railway contractors; and a glance at those of Mr. Brassey seem enough to overwhelm one man. A thousand miles of railway is no small distance; many thousands of labourers is no trifling responsibility; nine millions of pounds on his own account, and nine millions more in conjunction with two others, is no small sum; yet in fifteen years has Mr. Brassey undertaken and succeeded in these things; and at the early age of forty-five is able to look back on a useful, laborious, and—if measured by deeds—a long life, spent in works which have contributed to the happiness of thousands. A prominent exception to this gentleman's general success, was in the fall of a viaduct built by him on the Rouen and Havre line, composed of twenty-seven arches, very nearly completed, and costing 30,000*l*. An accident like this would have quenched the zeal of most persons; but it proved a memorable illustration of the character of Mr. Brassey, and was a marked test of the man. Although there could be no moral claim, as, during its construction, he had repeatedly protested against the material, and though the lawyers expressly repudiated all legal responsibility, the fine and almost chivalric spirit of the "descendant of the Brasseys of Bulkeley" burst forth when he said, "*he had contracted to make and maintain the road, and no law should prevent Thomas Brassey from being as good as his word.*" The engagement was made good; the viaduct was rebuilt; and the word which the contractor maintained inviolate is not inaptly typified by the stability of the work he reformed. The energy of this gentleman will be appreciated when it is known, that though sixteen million bricks were required to rebuild the viaduct, and though fourteen millions of these were made on the spot, the stupendous erection was finished in seven months.—*Frances' History of the English Railway.*

LOOK TO YOUR LADDERS.—At Nottingham, lately, Mr. Mason, joiner, builder, &c., was killed by the snapping of a very long ladder which had been in use for a number of years. He had mounted almost to the top, notwithstanding the warning from a bricklayer, who had refused to ascend it, that it was exceedingly unsafe; and another person was recklessly following, when the ladder broke in two pieces near the centre. The warnings of workmen in such cases ought never to be despised, as doubtless the *esprit du corps* will induce them to brave danger as long as any one safely can; and it is the duty of masters to test such apparatus occasionally for the sake of their workmen's lives at least, if not of their own, instead of virtually taunting them with cowardice by acting practically in the face of their warnings.

SIR WILLIAM CUBITT.—Not many years since he was in the employ of the Messrs. Ransome, of this town. The first steam-engine in Ipswich was erected by him; and the gas-works of the town were constructed under his direction. He invented the patent windmill sails, now almost universally adopted; and many an incorrigible rogue has done any thing but bless him for contriving the treadmills in our prisons. He was the engineer who was employed to erect the present Stoke Bridge, after the old structure had been swept away by the floods. Soon after the completion of this work, he left this town for the metropolis, but not until he had given evidence of the possession of a very high order of engineering talent. In London he had placed under his charge the task of removing Shakspere's Cliffe, at Dover, and was subsequently chosen engineer of the South-Eastern line of railway. Having been elected a member of the Royal Society of Civil Engineers, he subsequently so distinguished himself as to be elected its president,—a position he still worthily fills.—*Ipswich Express.*

METROPOLITAN SEWERS COMMISSION.—On the 5th inst. the ordinary monthly court was held at Greek-street, when new works at Greenwich were ordered to be executed by Mr. W. Dethick, as the successful candidate out of six who had lodged tenders. As to the drainage of Lee, in Kent, and its vicinity, Captain Dawson spoke at some length, explaining delay, &c., and he gave notice of motion on next general Court-day for a return of all the works authorised by the Sewers' Commission for the Metropolitan Districts, and amounts paid for same since April, 1850; and for the rescinding of a special rate ordered to pay one-half the works in Dacre-street, Church-street, and Boome-street, the whole sum to be paid out of the district rates he proposed with reference thereto. Complaints of ditches at Camberwell, and the desirability of drainage at Rotherhithe and Stoke Newington were then considered, and a number of minor works disposed of, and the Court adjourned till Wednesday next.

METROPOLITAN SEWAGE MANURE COMPANY.—We regret to find it reported that this company has got into new difficulties, or rather has never got out of those old difficulties by which it appears to have been beset from the very commencement. We have almost never had any thing very favourable as to its proceedings to report; but we hope that the measures about to be taken for its extrication may lead to more favourable accounts of its future progress. A committee has been appointed for the purpose, who are to report to the shareholders in course of next month.

THE STRIKE.—We regret to say that Mr. Myers's men have not yet returned to their work. A public meeting was held by them on Thursday evening, too late for us to refer to the proceedings.

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